

VISIT ROWAN COUNTY

SALISBURY, NORTH CAROLINA

Be an original.

ROWAN COUNTY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Wednesday, October 10, 2018, Noon, Gateway Building

MEETING AGENDA

- | | | |
|-------|---|----------------------------------|
| I. | Rowan County TDA Call to Order | Krista Osterweil, Board Chair |
| II. | Approval of TDA Board Meeting Minutes | Krista Osterweil, Board Chair |
| III. | Occupancy Tax Reports | James Meacham, TDA Staff |
| IV. | Destination Marketing Report | Tara Furr, TDA Staff |
| | 1. 2019 Brand Marketing-NC Tourism Partnerships | |
| V. | Tourism Capital Committee Report | Whitney Wallace, Committee Chair |
| VI. | 2019 Tourism Programs | Krista Osterweil, Board Chair |
| | A. Rowan Originals | |
| | B. Arts & Ag Continuation | |
| VII. | Additional Business | |
| VIII. | Adjourn | |

VISIT ROWAN COUNTY

SALISBURY, NORTH CAROLINA

Be an original.

ROWAN COUNTY TDA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Wednesday, August 15, 2018: 12:00 pm, Gateway Building

CALLED MEETING MINUTES

Board Members Attending: Krista Osterweil, Whitney Wallace, Edward Norvell, Craig Pierce, Steve Hall, Tony Shaw

Not Attending: Kelly Alexander, Brian Miller, Amie Baudoin, Darrell Blackwelder,

TDA Staff: James Meacham, Tara Furr, Sarah Michalec, Allyson Teague

Approval of the Minutes

Motion: Craig Pierce made a motion for approval of the June and July 2018 minutes as presented.

Second: Edward Norvell

Motion: Approved

Financial Report

Meacham reported record growth has continued with the finish of fiscal year 2017-18 up 15%. June 2018 was a strong month compared to June 2017. May 2018 was up around 3% compared to May 2017. The new Hilton is on schedule for opening in the spring of 2019. NC Division of Tourism released reports that breaks up data by regions. The region as a whole for fiscal year 2017-2018 was up 5%, while Rowan is outpacing the region with a 15% fiscal year growth rate

Destination Marketing Report

Tara Furr reported that RCTDA has a new employee, Sarah Michalec who is coming to us from High Point University. Sarah is from Salisbury and will be serving as the new Destination Marketing Manager.

Furr reviewed the Destination Marketing report for July noting that Trolleys are continuing to do well. Furr stated that the Fall Winery Trolley Tours are coming up in September. The Fall Winery Tours will occur on Saturdays throughout September with the Trolley visiting two Rowan County wineries each Saturday.

Visitor Services has completed 220 fulfilled inquires year-to-date as well as distributed the new end of summer quarterly event calendar in the Kiosks and handled many package calls for Day out with Thomas over the summer.

Group sales are going well with the Little League group in July, the NC Main Street Conference booked for March of 2018 and with Charlotte being awarded the RNC in 2020.

Furr reported the committee approved a Tourism Marketing Investment application for the Brewbury Festival that will take place in September. Lodging support for out of town breweries and a package was approved for the festival.

TDA packages in place include: Brewbury Festival, Thomas and Polar Express. Overnight room sales are up for both Thomas and Polar Express compared to the same time period in 2017.

Scrooge Trolley tour tickets are on sale and Lee Street has added an additional night of tours each week for the 2018 season.

Furr reviewed the digital marketing statistics noting a large increase in website traffic in July. Furr stated that the all TDA digital marketing will transition from Mollie Ruf at Miller Davis to Sarah Michalec by October 1st. All digital platforms continued to show growth over the summer.

Arts & Ag continues to go well and is being pushed heavily on social media as well as Thomas and Polar Express. The Brew & Choo Festival had strong attendance and was well attended on August 11th with all the beer tasting train rides sold out (430 tickets). The Tomato Festival takes place this weekend in Woodleaf. TDA staff and the Arts & Ag information tent will be attending the festival.

Staff will be attending the NC Division of Tourism's mid-year update in September.

Tourism Capital Committee Report

Meacham reported on the revisions to the Railwalk Pavilion project, those plans have been approved by the inspections department at the County and we are able to proceed with the changes that the TDA board authorized.

Additional Business

Tara Furr continues to do a great job and has been promoted to Chief Marketing Officer with the marketing aspects of the organization under her control. Allyson Teague and Sarah Michalec now directly report to Furr.

Meacham noted that in regards to the TDA recommendations for staggered terms, the City Council and County Commission will take up those recommendations next week. Steve Hall and Edward Norvell moving off the TDA Board at the last meeting in June 2018.

There are three applicants to the TDA Board including Don Bringle, County lodging, Cyndi Greenwood, City lodging and Stephen Kidd, At-large seat. Those applicants will be coming up for consideration for appointment in September.

The CVB and TDA annual audits will occur in September with results coming to the board in January 2019.

This fall the initiative from last year's budget of the shuttle services between lodging properties, businesses, etc. will be starting up in the fall. Drivers are being identified and then will work on the transportation route.

Adjourn

Krista Osterweil thanked the members for attending today and the meeting adjourned at 12:40pm.

Respectfully submitted by: Lesley Pullium, RCTDA

VISIT ROWAN COUNTY

SALISBURY, NORTH CAROLINA

Be an original.

ROWAN COUNTY TDA BOARD OF DIRECTORS PLANNING SESSION

Wednesday, September 12, 2018: 12:00 pm, Gateway Building

PLANNING SESSION MINUTES

Board Members Attending: Whitney Wallace, Cyndi Greenwood, Craig Pierce, Stephen Kidd, Tony Shaw, Amie Baudoin, Kelly Alexander

Not Attending: Brian Miller, Krista Osterweil, Darrell Blackwelder, Don Bringle

Guest: Chris Cavanaugh - Magellan Strategies

TDA Staff: James Meacham, Tara Furr, Sarah Michalec, Allyson Teague, Lesley Pullium

Meacham thanked everyone for attending and welcomed Cyndi Greenwood, Quality Inn, and Stephen Kidd, Ameriprise Financial, to the board. Introductions were made around the room.

Meacham reported that the NC Division of Travel and Tourism and Duke Energy have been working with DMO partners around the state to assist with hurricane updates, lodging for evacuated citizens and for the power crews. Sarah and Tara have been keeping the state up-to-date on Rowan County's room availability.

Tara Furr reported that several local events have been postponed or cancelled due to the hurricane, including the Brewbury Festival and GermanFest. The Biker, Blues and BBQ is still going forward and the Rowan Fair is planning to open as weather permits. Staff will continue to communicate with both local and state partners.

Strategic Planning Session & Review

Meacham introduced Chris Cavanaugh who will facilitate a discussion on a quick strategic assessment and guidance for RCTDA. Cavanaugh stated that much of the discussion today will go back to the Tourism Master Plan from 2013. Two key components of the TMP were to make the plan the driving force behind all decision making for the next 10 years, and to offer a focus point of tourism economic growth of doubling of economic impact from tourism in 10 years. Cavanaugh gave a PowerPoint led discussion covering:

Tourism Master Plan – set the stage for organizational plan and focus

- Organizational Structure
- Destination Marketing & Branding
- Destination and Product Development
- Partnership Structure & Connectivity

History of the Organization – Milestones

Established in 1987 with 1% tax; 1991 tax increase to 3%,
Trolleys, STCDC established, 501C6 organization, TMP, Gateway Building ownership,
Development of the Community Brand, Rewriting of the TDA Legislation restructuring to a county wide
tourism development authority

RCTDA Today – Lean organizational structure, aligned with the strategic vision,
purposeful destination marketing & branding, a unique model of destination
and product development, development of successful partnerships and connectivity,
effective and individualized partnerships, flexibility, successful adoption of the community brand, unique
and sound product development investments, good reporting and accountability

Strategic Planning - General

Objective – Double economic impact in 10 year time period
Scope – Know capabilities, assets, customers and geographic market and are vertically integrated
Competitive Advantage –Unique activities, customer value proposition, successful use of assets

Understanding the strategic sweet spot

Future – Future growth opportunities and potential from new audiences and markets
Future destination marketing plan, new product development, partnership structure changes

Cavanaugh asked the members to share their input on what they feel is next for the TDA. It was noted that much of the TDA marketing is an incentivization model such as the Day Out with Thomas and Polar Express incentive package programs in partnership with the NC Transportation Museum. This type of marketing has been very successful and has increased growth in tourism revenue.

The Board discussed how the TDA marketing team has done a good job in utilizing the digital investments to capitalize on this incentivized investment approach while also telling the destination story. It was discussed that the Arts & Ag program in 2018 also served to bridge cross-sectional sites and attractions across the county while selling the brand and telling the story. The Board was asked for input on these models moving forward, if they wanted to continue this approach, to explore new models as well as their ideas and suggestions for future.

The Board noted that an important aspect moving forward is understanding the destination's growing product and future growth coming in the southern area of the county. Staff recognizes that a new microcosm is building in the Southern end of the county creating two prominent areas (Kannapolis and Salisbury) that will support the overall growth of the county.

Craig Pierce said that we need to develop a strategic plan on how to extend our reach into the southern end of the county to capitalize on the growing visitation and activity in that area. Pierce suggested working with the City of Kannapolis on the development of tourism partnerships in order to develop programs that encourage these new visitors to venture deeper into Rowan County. The Board was agreement with Pierce's thought process and recognition of long term opportunities in Southern Rowan.

Meacham asked Alexander and Baudoin their thoughts on the current marketing support program with the tiered system of every room night booked the support goes up. Both stated that while this approach is still new it is working well, especially for the larger organizations like NCTM. Some of the smaller organizations are learning how to utilize the program better with their events. Alexander praised the Arts & Ag initiative with the cross promotion. The initiative brought a great deal of new people to some sites and attractions that they had not visited prior as well as promoting the brand county-wide with the colorful signs, billboards and flags.

Cyndi Greenwood said that last year during a time when the industry is usually slow (Oct – Dec), the impact of Day Out with Thomas and the Polar Express on the local lodging industry was huge. The marketing support and incentivization for those events has a big impact on local lodging.

Stephen Kidd noted that TDA's partnerships with the EDC and the Chamber of Commerce have been very beneficial for both organizations and he would like to see those partnerships continue.

Pierce asked about having a liaison from RCTDA to work more regionally with Cabarrus County TDA as a part of developing the relationship with Kannapolis and the southern end of Rowan County. Representatives from Kannapolis currently serve on the TDA Marketing and Tourism Capital Committees.

Shaw agreed with the comments of Pierce in regards to the growth in the southern part of the county and that it is important that the TDA makes an effort to expand our presence in that area.

Meacham noted that what he is hearing is approval of the current marketing support approach, working on the development of what the next Arts & Ag will look like as well as increasing outreach and presence in Southern 185 corridor in the China Grove to Kannapolis area.

Meacham asked the board if they are still supportive of the partnership leverage model that the TDA has used to accomplish larger capital projects such as with the City to purchase the new Trolleys and with the County to complete the Railwalk Project and Community Branding. This model has allowed the TDA to complete some large initiatives by securing funds with the help of partners and then paying those partners back over time. Consensus of the board was that this model has worked well. Cavanaugh stressed continued flexibility and staying nimble with ability of quick decision making.

In summary, Cavanaugh said to keep in mind the idea of the sweet spot, stay focused on growth, think about skating to where the puck is going to be next. With all the changes in the industry, the market and the destination where the puck is now is not where it will be in five years.

Adjourn

The Board was thanked for attending today and the meeting adjourned at 1:00pm.

Respectfully submitted by: Lesley Pullium, RCTDA

Rowan County Occupancy Tax Receipts (GROSS)

| MONTH | FY15-16 | FY16-17 | %CHNG | FY17-18 | %CHNG | FY18-19 | %CHNG |
|-------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|--------------|----------------------|--------------|-----------|-------|
| July | \$ 64,271.42 | 65,208.17 | 1.5% | 72,999.06 | 11.9% | 82,827.79 | 13.5% |
| August | \$ 62,590.56 | 66,663.57 | 6.5% | 76,010.73 | 14.0% | 84,227.53 | 10.8% |
| September | \$ 63,255.27 | 64,467.53 | 1.9% | 74,220.99 | 15.1% | | |
| Quarter Total | \$ 190,117.25 | 196,339.27 | 3.3% | 223,230.78 | 14% | | |
| October | \$ 77,003.85 | 79,169.16 | 2.8% | 92,286.61 | 16.6% | | |
| November | \$ 60,532.12 | 62,445.01 | 3.2% | 79,174.98 | 26.8% | | |
| December | \$ 51,001.36 | 54,165.23 | 6.2% | 68,584.25 | 26.6% | | |
| Quarter Total | \$ 188,537.33 | 195,779.40 | 3.8% | 240,045.84 | 22.6% | | |
| January | \$ 53,223.53 | 56,069.00 | 5.3% | 64,114.21 | 14.3% | | |
| February | \$ 58,278.45 | 59,387.76 | 1.9% | 68,703.79 | 15.7% | | |
| March | \$ 63,177.91 | 70,895.99 | 12.2% | 84,759.62 | 19.6% | | |
| Quarter Total | \$ 174,679.89 | 186,352.75 | 6.7% | 217,577.62 | 16.8% | | |
| April | \$ 72,366.67 | 83,161.39 | 14.9% | 92,168.35 | 10.8% | | |
| May | \$ 73,046.32 | 87,164.78 | 19.3% | 89,394.40 | 3% | | |
| June | \$ 69,446.31 | 76,624.86 | 10.3% | 85,776.47 | 12% | | |
| Quarter Total | \$ 214,859.30 | \$ 246,951.03 | 14.9% | 267,339.22 | 8.3% | | |
| Adjmts Penalties | | | | | | | |
| Penalties | | | | | | | |
| Year Total | \$ 768,193.77 | \$ 825,422.45 | 7.4% | \$ 948,193.46 | 14.9% | | |

